

In The Claims

Please add the following new claims.

28. (New) An interconnect structure comprising:
a plurality of metal lines formed on a substrate;
low-k dielectric structures interposed between two or more of said metal
lines;
a second dielectric material formed above said metal lines;
a protective layer interposed between said low-k dielectric structures and
said second dielectric material; and
a conductive feature formed within said second dielectric material and said
protective layer, said conductive feature in contact with at least one of said plurality of
metal lines.

29. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 28, wherein said
protective layer includes dielectric material.

30. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 28, further
comprising a liner.

31. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 30, wherein said
liner comprises a material selected from the group consisting of titanium, titanium nitride,
tantalum, tantalum nitride, aluminum, copper, and tungsten nitride.

32. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 28, further
comprising a spacer interposed between said low-k material and said conductive feature.

33. (New) The interconnect structure according to claim 28, further
comprising a spacer interposed between said low-k material and a liner.